

The dating of the Sticherarion EBE 883

Ioannis Papathanasiou

In memory of Jørgen Raasted

The dating of Byzantine musical manuscripts offers a great deal of problems. Very often the dates given in older library catalogues ought to be revised according to modern palaeographical criteria and a careful study of the musical notation. In the present paper I shall deal with such a case, MS Athens (EBE) 883, which has also engaged Jørgen Raasted in two of his last articles¹.

The catalogue of manuscripts² of the Greek National Library informs us that it is a Sticherarion measuring 300 x 200 mm, consisting of 357 folios (mutilated), and that it was supposedly written in the 12th century³. All Hymnographers referred to in the manuscript are mentioned further on in the catalogue. In addition to the information derived from the catalogue we may mention that the numbering of the fascicles is placed in the lower inner margin of the first and the last folio of each *quaternio*. The parchment is of good quality and for the ruling⁴ of the fascicles system 1 and type 33D1d were used. A light

¹J. RAASTED, *Koukouzeles' Sticherarion*, in *Proceedings of the Danish Institut of Athens, Supplementary Series Vol. II* (forthcoming), see also J. RAASTED, *Koukouzeles' Revision of the Sticherarion and Sinai gr. 1230*, in *Laborare fratres in unum, Festschrift Laszlo Dobcsay zum 60. (Spolia Berolinensis, Berliner Beiträge zur Mediävistik, 7)*, Hildesheim 1995, pp. 261-277.

²I. ΣΑΚΚΕΛΙΩΝΟΣ- A. ΣΑΚΚΕΛΙΩΝΟΣ, *Κατάλογος τῶν χειρογράφων τῆς Ἐθνικῆς Βιβλιοθήκης τῆς Ἑλλάδος*, Ἀθῆναι 1892.

³Tillyard accepts the same dating, H. J. W. TILLYARD, *The Hymns of the Pentecostarium*, (*Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae, VII*), Copenhagen 1960, p. XXXII.

⁴For the ruling systems and types see J. LEROY, *Quelques systèmes de réglure des manuscrits grecs*, (*Studia codicologica, 124*), Berlin 1977, pp. 291-312, IDEM, *La description codicologique des manuscrits grecs de parchemin*, in *La paleographie grecque et byzantine*, (*Colloques internationaux du Centre Nationale de la Recherche Scientifique, 559*), Paris 1977, pp. 27-44, IDEM, *Les Types de réglure des manuscrits grecs*, Paris 1976.

tone brown-black ink was used for the writing of the poetic text and the neumes. The repertory⁵ of the MS includes stichera *idiomela* for the months September through August, the *Triodion*, the *Pentekostarion* and finally a part of the *Oktoechos*.

At first glance, one could easily draw the conclusion that it is a manuscript of a later period than the one proposed by the authors of the catalogue. As it was commonly practised until the end of the 12th century, the same instrument was used for the text and the musical notation. In our manuscript, a cut straw different from that of the text was used to write the neumes, a practice also observed later, specifically from the beginning of the 13th century. For the dating of the musical manuscripts it is, however, very illusive to rely on the notation alone. The use of older stages of notation than normally used in the period when the manuscript was produced is a recurrent phenomenon⁶, and thus, the notation of our manuscript, a fully developed middle Byzantine type though with archaizing features and

⁵The last folio of the fascicle nr. λ' is lost. The prosomion “δ Σεραφεῖμ τοῖς ἀνω φοβερός” (f. 352^v, fasc. με') is interrupted after the word ‘ἀνθρωπικῶς’. Then the last quaternio does not bear any numbering.

⁶In particular, in order to refer to some examples, the manuscript Athos Esphigmenou 54 is dated in the 12th century, although the notation is characterised as “archaic” (Coislin I/Floros). The same phenomenon appears also in the manuscript Sabba 83, in which although its script is dated in the second half of the 12th century, a notation of an earlier notational stage (Coislin II-III/Floros) was used for the music. Based on that, we could easily assume that the copyist used a manuscript with archaic notation as model. However, in this case the question is why a manuscript whose stage of notation was not in use in the 12th century, was used as Vorlage? It is possible that the use of notational stages from an earlier period, could indicate the simultaneous use of different notational stages in the central and provincial regions of the Byzantine Empire. Consequently the dating of the musical manuscripts of the Middle Ages can not be based exclusively on the examination of the notation which could however and must be used as a supplementary feature.

In relation with the MS Sabba 83, see J. RAASTED, *Hirmologium Sabbaiticum*, (*Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae*, VIII), Copenhagen 1968, A. DODA, Note codicologiche, paleografiche e paleografico-musicali su uno sticherarion dell'XI secolo, in *Jahrbuch der Österreichischen Byzantinistik*, 39 (1989), pp. 217-239, esp. p. 227, note 31.

For the reference to notational stages, see C. FLOROS, *Universale Neumenkunde*, Band I, Kassel 1970, pp. 311-326.

with many red variants, can not constitute the sole clue for its chronological placement⁷.

The last and significant feature for the dating of the manuscript is the examination of the script, or the scripts, of the chant text. In order to copy the manuscripts which were designated for worship purposes, within the framework of the general conservatism that characterised the church, they used scripts loyal to the oldest calligraphic traditions, without the numerous ligatures and other characteristics of the “contemporary” scripts. In the case of musical manuscripts the use of a legible type of writing was undoubtedly a mere necessity. We have mentioned above that the use of different instruments of writing, one for the neumes and another for the text of the chants, gives us the possibility to propose as *terminus post quem* the beginning of the 13th century. On the other hand, the use of parchment which enhances the production cost by a great deal in comparison with paper, induces us to accept the years around 1340 as a *terminus ante quem* for the copying of the manuscript⁸. During the 13th century, the Greek writing moved away from the calligraphic forms of letters that characterised the previous centuries and features such as a large number of abbreviations, many new ligatures, and the joint of accents and spirits with the corresponding vowel gave the text a totally different appearance. By the middle of the 13th century, parallel to the introduction of a new script type which Hunger named

⁷As far as the neumatic notation is concerned, it is possible to isolate some characteristic features of the first stages of the middle Byzantine notation. The non frequent use of the great *hypostaseis*, is observed. However the use of *paraklitike* of Palaeobyzantine and middle Byzantine type is frequent. For the use of the *paraklitike*, see CHR. TROELSGÅRD, *The rôle of paraklitiké in Palaeobyzantine Notations*, in *Palaeobyzantine Notations. A reconsideration of the Source Material*, Hernen 1993, pp. 81-117. The second note of a *xeron klasma* of two neumes, is followed or not according to the case, by the *klasma*, while the *diple* sign, in most of the cases is placed slightly to the right of the neume which it accompanies.

⁸G. PRATO, *La presentazione del testo nei manoscritti tardobizantini*, in *Il libro e il testo. Atti del Convegno Internazionale* (Urbino, 20-23 settembre 1982), Urbino 1984, pp. 69-84, esp. p. 78, reprinted in G. PRATO, *Studi di Paleografia Greca*, Spoleto 1994, pp. 133-149.

‘Fettaugen-Mode’⁹, *mimesis*¹⁰ of script types from the 10th and 11th centuries began to appear.

Let us turn back to our manuscript and examine the form of its letters.

Alpha appears always in the minuscule form. When within a word, it is joined with the following letter.

Beta always appears as a minuscule with the form of the Latin *u* and is always joined with the following letter.

Gamma appears as capital letter except in few cases. The capital *gamma* does not exceed the height of the other letters.

Delta: The majuscule and the minuscule form of the letter alternate, although the first seems to appear more often.

Epsilon: The small and the capital form of the letter alternate. The capital form is of small dimensions except in some cases where it appears slightly bigger than the others letters. The minuscule *epsilon* is in many cases found in ligature with *iota*, *sigma* and *tau*. The ligature with *xi* is very characteristic, while in rare cases only the upper part of the letter appears and it is joined with the following letter.

Zeta appears usually with the form of the numeral 3. Many times however we see the form [Ζ].

Eta appears usually in its majuscule form, while there are many cases in which it appears in its minuscule form.

Theta appears with the “ogivale” form of the early minuscule writing. It is often larger than the remaining letters, open on its left side, and then joined with the following letter.

Iota: When it is not joined with the preceding letter, it appears with a dot on the left side, while in all other cases the same dot appears on the lower right side of the letter.

Kappa appears in its capital form, slightly exceeding the other letters.

Lambda appears either in minuscule or in majuscule form. Ligatures with the letters *omikron* and *gamma* are very characteristic and is usually met in MSS of the 10th and 11th centuries in the word ‘λόγος’.

Mu appears usually as a minuscule letter, while it is difficult to distinguish from its majuscule form that appears under the shape of the “Alexandrinian” majuscule writing.

Nu appears always as a minuscule letter. On its left side it is joined with the letters *alpha* and *epsilon*.

Xi: On the left side, it is found in ligature with the letters *alpha* and *epsilon*.

Omicron: Its dimensions are in harmony with the other letters.

Pi is written as a minuscule letter in almost in all cases.

⁹H. HUNGER, *Die sogenannte Fettaugen-Mode in griechischen Handschriften des 13. und 14. Jahrhunderts*, in *Byzantinische Forschungen*, 4 (1972), pp. 105-113.

¹⁰G. PRATO, *Scritture librarie arcaizzanti della prima età dei Paleologi e loro modelli*, in *Scrittura e Civiltà*, 3 (1979), pp. 151-193, reprinted in G. PRATO, *Studi di Paleografia Greca*, Spoleto 1994, pp. 73-114.

Rho is often joined with the following letter, and its open left side is often found in ligature with **alpha**.

Sigma: The small and the capital form alternate. It is often found in ligature with **tau**, with **epsilon** (when it precedes) and with **sigma** (when it follows).

Tau: Its dimensions are in harmony with and do not exceed the other letters.

Ypsilon appears often in harmony with the rest, but is in some cases lowered a little in relation to the other letters.

Phi appears with the form of the modern G clef, often open from the left side when in ligature with the preceding letter.

Chi is formed by the two diagonal lines being joined.

Psi is a letter of large dimensions, often found in the form of a cross.

Omega appears as minuscule letter, except in few cases.

Similar characteristics with those of the sticherarion EBE 883, appear in manuscripts of the 13th century, in which, as mentioned above, the phenomenon of *mimesis* of script types of the 10th and 11th centuries is noticed. However, features related to the contemporary writing practices appear as well and betray the actual age of many of these manuscripts¹¹, as for instance, the letters *omicron*, *sigma* and *theta* which are influenced by the “Fettaugen-Mode” and have bigger dimensions than the other letters, spirits joined with accents, and the form of *tau* and *gamma* which exceeds significantly the height of the other letters. In the case of the Athenian codex 883, we could notice the frequent use of the enlarged round *theta*, the rare appearance of the high *gamma* (f.115^v), and the absence¹² of the other features which could in turn make us definitely sure about the dating of the manuscript in the second half of the 13th century.

At the Dano-Hellenic symposium on matters of Byzantine music and medieval philosophy held in Athens, November 1993¹³, after a careful examination of the standard repertory of the Sticherarion , Jørgen Raasted placed the codex EBE 883 in one of the two groups of

¹¹PRATO, *Scritture librarie arcaizzanti*, op. cit., pp. 184-185.

¹²In Byzantine musical manuscripts, for instance, spirits and accents appear only in the titles and not in the poetic text in order to avoid confusion with the neumes of the notation.

¹³See note 1.

manuscripts that reflect the revision of the Sticherarion by *Ioannes Koukouzeles*¹⁴.

Group I: Codex “Peribleptus”[N], Athos Dionysiou 564[386], Athos Vatopediou 1493, EBE 884, EBE 883.

Group II: Ambrosianus gr. A139 sup.¹⁵, Sinai gr.1230¹⁶.

In connection with the dating of the MS EBE 883, Raasted disagrees with the dating suggested by the catalogue of the Library:

“Its date: in the catalogue - and hence in literature until now- this Sticherarion is dated ‘12th century’. Its evident connection with one of our ‘Koukouzelian’ subgroups makes this earlier date absolutely impossible. It must be late 13th century, at the earliest, but probably 14th! The mistake is understandable, however. For the text is written in an archaising type of script, a *scrittura mimetica*...”¹⁷.

In the case of our manuscript EBE 883, the use of the term “scrittura mimetica” in order to characterise the handwriting, does not correspond to reality. Instead of speaking of writing imitation, it is preferable to speak about a conservatism since the older writing styles never quite disappeared in the production of liturgical chant books. I regard it very risky to reject the possibility that the manuscript originated in the 12th century, only because it belongs to one of the “Koukouzelian” groups as regards to musical characteristics. On the

¹⁴See O. STRUNK, *Melody Construction in Byzantine Chant*, in *Actes du XIIe congrès international d'études byzantines*, Belgrade 1993, pp. 365-373, reprinted in, *Essays on Music in the Byzantine world*, ed. Kenneth Levy, New York 1977, pp. 191-201, IDEM, P. Lorenzo Tardo and his Ottoeco nei MSS. melurgici. *Some Observations on the Stichera Dogmatika*, in *Bollettino della Badia Greca di Grottaferrata*, 21 (1967), pp. 21-34, reprinted in *Essays on Music in the Byzantine world*, ed. Kenneth Levy, New York 1977, pp. 255-267, L. TARDO, *L'antica melurgia bizantina*, Grottaferrata 1938, p. 73.

¹⁵L.PERRIA-J.RAASTERD, *Sticherarium Ambrosianum*, (*Monumenta Musicae Byzantinae, Pars principalis et pars suppletoria*, XI), Copenhague 1992.

¹⁶G. AMARGIANAKIS, *An analysis of stichera in the Deuteros Modes. The Stichera Idiomela for the Month of September in the Modes Deuteros, Plagal Deuteros, and Nenano Transcribed from the Manuscript Sinai 1230 (A.D. 1365)*, in *Cahiers de l'Institut du Moyen-âge Grec et Latin*, 22-23 (1977).

¹⁷RAASTERD, *Koukouzeles' Sticherarion*, op. cit.

other hand, there are still serious doubts about the period during which *Ioannes Koukouzeles* created his work¹⁸ and we can not reject the possibility that the “Koukouzelian” codices known to us may be copies of manuscripts from the 12th century provided with early middle Byzantine notation¹⁹.

Even if we can elaborate on the dating of some “Koukouzelian” manuscripts, Raasted's work on the Koukouzelian “aesthetics” remains very important. The point that the “revision” - though modest in terms of changing melodic material - had a major consequence for the musical tradition of the Sticherarion, once more places *Koukouzeles*, who was able to innovate and preserve at the same time, at a very central position in the development of the Byzantine musical culture.

¹⁸In relation with Koukouzeles, Gregorios Stathes refers that he is living and flourishing from the beginning of the 14th century until 1336, while in 1341 “πρέστει νὰ μὴν ὑπῆρχεν ἐν τῇ ζωῇ”, see ΓΡ. ΣΤΑΘΗΣ, *Οἱ ἀναγραμματισμοὶ καὶ τὰ μαθήματα τῆς Βυζαντινῆς Μελοποιίας*, (2nd ed.) Αθῆναι 1992, pp. 126-127, esp. p. 127, note 4, IDEM, ‘Ο Μαῖστωρ Ιωάννης Παπαδόπουλος ὁ Κουκουζέλης’, Αθήνα 1986, pp. 14-20. On the contrary, Simon Karas places Koukouzeles in the 2nd half of the 12th century, before the Latin occupation, see Σ. ΚΑΡΑΣ, *Ιωάννης Μαῖστωρ ὁ Κουκουζέλης καὶ ἡ ἐποχὴ του*, Αθῆναι 1992, p. 65.

¹⁹See note 7, see also ΚΑΡΑΣ, *Ιωάννης Μαῖστωρ*, op. cit, p. 37. For the introduction of the middle Byzantine notation in the 12th century see I. PAPATHANASIOU, *The Musical Notation of the Sticherarion MS Vat. Barb. gr. 483*, in *Proceedings of the Danish Institut of Athens, Supplementary Series Vol. II* (forthcoming).

62

ποιεῖ οὐχί εστιν· μηδέκανδις από τούρων
τριάντα πεντε πενταφωρεύων τους· διάτε
λιζόμενος εἰς εκκριψών καὶ καθευπήρια.
ποιεῖ τοιούτοις οὐδὲν οὐ στρατόπεδον
αλλαγὴν αποτελεῖ τοιούτοις περιστροφαῖς
πριν τοῦ· εἴηντοι οἱ οἰκτηνασκάδες
διατριβήν τούτην περιστροφαῖς περιποτίαν καὶ
στρατικήν τούτου στρατουπούσαντο τοῦ πλούτου
καὶ διατελεῖ τούτην πετύποιν· οὐτε βασιλεὺς
πατερούχη γερκατορχριστούποιτελῶ
μεσον κολοφονική τεχνίτης· καὶ κηρυχτή
διατελεῖται οὐθενὸς οὐχι μετατοπεύ
περιστροφαῖς προφορικής οὐδενός
πατερούχησιστοι κουρεῖται· εἰ μηδέ κατεργά
περιστροφαῖς πατερούχησιστοι κουρεῖται
τοῦτον τοῦτον προτερούχησιστοι κουρεῖται

